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ABSTRACT

The New School of Liberal Arts, a part of Brooklyn College, utilized team teaching techniques in order to raise reading, writing, and general skills levels of underprepared college students in the New York City area. During the year's study, students received intensive developmental help in conjunction with content courses in social institutions, literature, art, and science of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western and Indian history. The team teaching approach of the social institutions class was used to develop reading, thinking, and study skills. One-to-one tutoring was provided for severely retarded students, and reading was also taught as a separate skills area. When the traditional barriers between content and skills faculty were crossed, reading improved, students assimilated more information, and study skills were transferred to other areas. By the end of the program, the majority of students were functioning on a productive, independent college level.
(Author/KS)

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The Development of Reading Skills Through A Holistic Team Teaching Approach

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PROGRAM DEFINITION

The Open Admissions Program in City University of New York has given students who historically would not have gotten a respectable education the opportunity to develop into responsive, skillful, mature and imaginative citizens. As a result of the CUNY policy, 79 percent of last year's City high school graduates were enrolled in college as compared with only 47.5 percent nationally.[1] A report published by the U.S. Office of Education estimated that over 30 percent of the nation's college freshman lack the basic reading skills needed to meet minimum requirements for college study.[2] Deficiencies in any major subject area can be crippling; the inability to read is deadly. Dr. Robert J. Kibbee, Chancellor of the City University, estimated that 15,800 students have come to CUNY unable to read.[3] Without this skill there is less hope for success in postschool employment and other life situations. Reading is an unquestioned requisite for a reasonable life; no person should be denied such capacity. Without the lifeline of a strongly supportive educational program, these students face a future without opportunity. The open door of the City University would become a revolving door to those most in need and to those to whom opportunities have historically been denied. Once again they would be the victims. In the spring of 1974, Dean Alden Sayres of the New School of Liberal Arts and the Department of Educational Services decided to cooperate in a program that was to combine subject matter of the NSLA program with concentrated attention to basic skills.

The New School of Liberal Arts, a part of Brooklyn College, is a college within a college; a small school for freshman and sophomores with a curriculum that is designed to provide the necessary background for specialized majors in the social sciences, humanities, education or science. Each semester a student at NSLA chooses a program of study built around a single time period in world history. In connection with each time period, courses are offered in four general subject areas: Social institutions, ideas, and philosophy; Literature; Scientific and mathematical developments; Art and music.

A curriculum which integrated skill building and content areas has been developed. In order to achieve this integration, the four "content area" faculty members team teach with four "skills area" faculty members; the social institutions teacher works closely with the reading teacher, the literature teacher with the writing teacher, the science teacher with the mathematics teacher, and the art teacher with the academic counselor.

The students in the Preparatory Year Program have a year rather than a semester to complete a 16 credit course of study. The program includes individual counseling, tutoring, academic courses and financial aid. The totality of the program may be the prime reason for its success.

In the opening weeks of the semester, it became clear that the members of the Preparatory Year Program team had to

accept the responsibility of helping each student realize his own potential. Unless the individual student understands that the process of acquiring skills is directly linked to the realization of his own particular potential, the sometimes tedious process of skill building becomes an activity seemingly unrelated from the total learning experience. A skills oriented program thus can be interpreted by the student as a reductionist and even punitive measure.

College is sometimes considered by the students as a type of reward for having completed high school. For the incoming freshman who has barely gotten through high school, college offers a highly valued status and promises prestige. If upon arrival at the first day of classes the student finds that he has been isolated into a program whose goal he interprets is to teach him that which should have been learned in high school, problems arise. A student's reaction to this can either be bitterness, out of resentment, or "to clam up," out of bewilderment. Either reaction is crippling and makes learning an unnecessarily difficult process -- the value of an intelligently planned and highly coordinated orientation session is crucial to the student's acceptance of the program. If the student is prepared during orientation to realistically evaluate his particular interests, talents and abilities, he will, it is hoped, enter such a program voluntarily. If the student is not given an opportunity to make a voluntary commitment to learning, a complex problem is created for both faculty and student.

While adjustment to the college classroom was taking place successfully, some students nonetheless had difficulties adjusting to the demands of learning outside the classroom and were not taking advantage of group and individual tutorial sessions scheduled outside the regularly held classes. At the root of these difficulties was the fact that the students made extensive outside commitments, especially to jobs, rendering attendance at tutorials of secondary importance. Individual students did not fully realize that being a student required a commitment to learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Outside commitments seemed to deprive the students of full participation in the learning process in the school building; when away from the building, social and other commitments compounded the difficulty of understanding of what it means to be a student. Discussions were held with the students to help them recognize and adjust to their new identity and the demands placed on them by school in terms of proper time and place to study when away from school, how to balance social commitments and academic responsibilities, and, most importantly, how to reassert their identity as students in a positive and helpful way to achieve productive work patterns. Becoming a student is a most difficult process. One of the primary purposes of the Preparatory Year Program is to help students meet the demands of this process and to share in the excitement of "becoming."

The overall objectives of the Preparatory Year Program were quite simple: to help a student to realize his own potential,

to develop productive independent work patterns and to learn skills and strategies that make it possible to glean the maximum from the college experience and to assist the student to function on a productive college level by the end of the program. By the end of the Preparatory Year, the student was expected to be able to succeed and profit from a regular college program. This was to be achieved by integrating skill building activities with the content courses of history, literature, science and art.

Team teaching was an important part of the program methodology. All of the faculty members in the Preparatory Year Program viewed themselves as teachers of skills and content. The traditional lines of demarcation which usually exist between skills and content areas were broken.

Given the importance of the Preparatory Year Program in terms of recent educational developments, as the reading instructor, I submit the following in order to share with my colleagues in the academic community my valuable experiences.

STRATEGIES FORMULATION

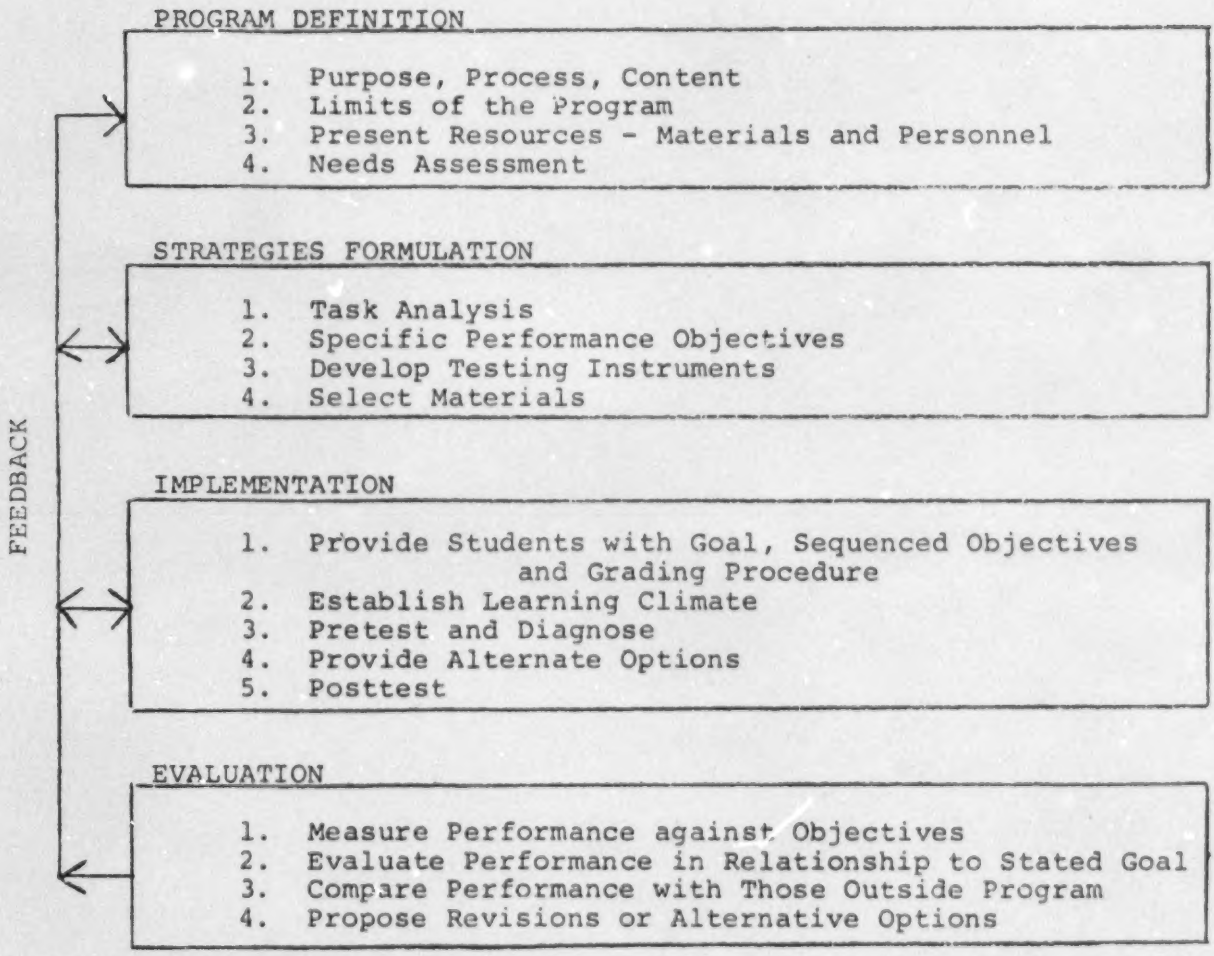
Because of the infinite combination of physiological and environmental factors affecting a student's development, there is no one technique for teaching reading that is effective for all students. Accepting this, it was necessary to develop a program that emphasized a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to teaching reading within the Age of Revolutions' social institutions

framework. Careful analysis of learning strengths and weaknesses was used in adopting methods best calculated to capitalize on each student's potential. Grouping, when utilized, was based on similarity of probable responses to a given approach rather than on simple similarity of measured achievement. The student's progress was constantly monitored, methods adopted and time alloted to view individual progress. A great diversity of approaches were used in the never-ending quest to find better ways to help students master the important skill of reading.[4]

The reading segment of the program was developed in the belief that joy, relevancy and aspirations are fundamental to successful learning. It was necessary to develop a reading program which encouraged learning and made it possible to learn. The recommendations found in this paper are all directed to these two goals. The primary focus, however, is on a reading program which continuously assesses the strengths and weaknesses of each and the continuous involvement of each student in successful learning experiences. The program relies on the student's increased personal involvement and success in learning as a major motivating force for further learning.

Four steps were followed in developing the reading module. The writings of Banathy[5] and Mager[6] were useful in developing course objectives; the work done by Kemp[7] was key in developing an instructional cost index. The four steps followed (program definition, strategies formulation, implementation and evaluation) are summarized in the following chart.

STEPS USED IN DEVELOPING THE READING PROGRAM


PROGRAM DEFINITION
1. Purpose, Process, Content
2. Limits of the Program
3. Present Resources - Materials and Personnel
4. Needs Assessment
STRATEGIES FORMULATION
1. Task Analysis
2. Specific Performance Objectives
3. Develop Testing Instruments
4. Select Materials
IMPLEMENTATION
1. Provide Students with Goal, Sequenced Objectives and Grading Procedure
2. Establish Learning Climate
3. Pretest and Diagnose
4. Provide Alternate Options
5. Posttest
EVALUATION
1. Measure Performance against Objectives
2. Evaluate Performance in Relationship to Stated Goal
3. Compare Performance with Those Outside Program
4. Propose Revisions or Alternative Options
FEEDBACK

Reading received heavy emphasis and was primarily taught by the use of materials from the social institutions class. We found that the same reading and study skills were applicable to all of the content areas. It was observed that once an essential reading skill was mastered (using the social institutions content materials) the students could then apply this skill to the other disciplines. When necessary, specific time was devoted to help make the transference from the social science to literature, art, anthropology, math and physics.

The interaction of language, cognition, memory, knowledge and experience contribute to the reading process. There is a large number of interrelated sub-skills which contribute to the total Gestalt -- reading. It was necessary to break the reading process into parts and to isolate various skills and sub-skills. The curriculum was therefore divided into three major components: comprehension, study skills and vocabulary.

The Fall term was used to provide students with the foundation in the skills required for the understanding and synthesizing of college-level materials on a literal comprehension level. The focus in the Spring semester was on the development of critical and analytical skills. The foundations acquired during the Fall term provided the students with the opportunity to synthesize, more comprehensively, a variety of increasingly more complex materials during the Spring term.

Reading comprehension is made up of the ability to receive information and process, retain and recall it when needed. A holistic approach was used to teach comprehension, vocabulary and study skills. The development from semester to semester was more qualitative than quantitive. Notetaking, reading to collect ideas for an essay, reading for discussion, study strategies, listening techniques and retention systems were part of the study skills module. Vocabulary was taught by use of a multi-faceted program which included the analytical-tools methodology, structural analysis (affixes, derivations, etymologies), psycholinguistics and contextual analysis. As the year progressed each area was taught with increasing depth using more complex materials. The nature of the material and the complexity of the ideas in the content holds students back. As the development of skills increased with more complex materials, the ability to deal with ideas and relationships between ideas expanded. Distinguishing main idea from supporting evidence, sequencing and organizing ideas and analytical critical reading were determined to be the most serious comprehension needs and were taught cyclically as part of the program.

Group instruction was utilized when common skills could be identified and taught. Often, the most effective reading instruction was individualized prescriptive instruction. In addition, students with specific remedial reading needs received one-to-one tutoring on a regular basis.

Steps were taken to assess the specific skills in which students needed instruction. Testing, conferences and discussions were used to diagnose specific skills deficiencies.

During the first week of class, each student was given two standardized tests - The McGraw-Hill Basic Skills Reading Test (Part 3 - Comprehension), a standardized reading comprehension test and the California Phonics Test, a standardized decoding test. Students who placed above 151.9 on the Cooperative English Reading Test or above the 25 percentile on the McGraw-Hill test were counselled into other programs where other options were available. A few elected to remain in the program and added a great deal of stimulation to the classes and they, in turn, experienced fine development.

The students enrolled in the program attained an average score of 144 on the ETS Cooperative English Test (administered the previous May). Using the norm tables established for college freshman, our students placed in the 5 to 14 percentile band. The average reading comprehension score achieved on the McGraw-Hill Basic Skills Reading Test placed our students, on the average, in the bottom 15th percentile band of college freshman in reading comprehension. These are group averages and caution was taken to avoid making generalizations for individual students. Individual scores on the McGraw-Hill test ranged from the -1 percentile to the 59th percentile. Eleven percentile was the mean comprehension score on the McGraw-Hill test.

By reviewing the results of the placement test (Cooperative English Test), the standardized reading comprehension test (McGraw-Hill) and the phonics test (California Phonics Test) and by doing an item analysis for the questions on the McGraw-Hill exam and California Phonics test, a reading profile was developed for each student isolating specific areas of individual weakness.

While standardized tests have serious flaws, they are valuable as an initial screening device. Among the inherent weaknesses in using standardized tests are that they are not normed on a comparable population. The objectives and emphasis of the standardized tests do not completely coincide with those of the program. Reading rate is a notable example and this section of the test was deleted. Reading in the content areas, the development of vocabulary and study skills are major objectives of the Prep year but are not tested by any of the standardized tests. The tests were used only to show a student's relevant standing with other students and were not used to evaluate a student's development in terms of his own capacity for learning or individual potential. A difference in one answer on the McGraw-Hill exam significantly can change results.

Informal reading inventories and cloze comprehension tests were used to help diagnose specific needs.

In addition, students took the Keystone Telebinocular Test (measures stereoposes, near and far point vision). Three

students received glasses. An audiometer test diagnosed a hitherto undiagnosed loss of hearing and steps were taken to help the student minimize the hearing impairment.

The standardized tests were administered at the end of the year program. Despite the above discussion on the limitations of the standardized tests, it should be noted that significant growth was achieved. The group mean increased from 15 percentile to over 34 percentile on the McGraw-Hill.

The teacher-prepared final exam showed even greater growth than the standardized tests since the final exam tested the objectives of the program and the attainment of these objectives during the Prep Year Program. It must also be noted that the Cooperative English Test was administered during the previous Spring and the second form of the test was not given as part of the post-testing.

Attached you will find a listing of the students and their pre-test and post-test results.

RESULTS OF STUDENT TESTING ON STANDARDIZED TESTS ADMINISTERED PRE AND POST PREP PROGRAM

STUDENT NUMBER	COOPERATIVE ENGLISH Pre-Course Test Total Score (Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary)	MCGRAW HILL READING COMP Pre-Course Percentile Score	MCGRAW HILL READING COMP Post-Course Percentile Score	CALIF. PHONICS Pre-Course (Raw Scores - Conversion Tables Are Not Available)	CALIF. PHONICS Post-Course (Raw Scores - Conversion Tables Are Not Available)	
1	148	6	22	55	58	
2	NA	6	18	48	59	
3	162	59	94	63	72	
4	132	8	14	53	65	
5	141	28	69	62	68	
6	151	22	69	68	77	
7	144	18	3	42	53	
8	130	8	6	56	59	
9	150	41	69	48	56	
10	137	8	41	45	53	
11	143	8	18	46	49	
12	137	11	NA	60	NA	**
13	147	11	18	62	68	
14	137	-1	28	41	51	
15	143	2	12	50	51	
16	137	-1	3	37	61	
17	135	1	12	23	49	
18	141	8	47	59	61	
19	156	27	69	61	70	
20	154	41	50	59	62	
21	145	11	59	-	64	
22	140	47	56	47	56	
23	135	2	6	34	39	
24	150	22	69	55	65	
25	152	22	50	64	70	
26	151	3	27	41	48	
27	NA	6	27	65	70	
28	NA	3	8	47	52	
29	151	56	89	64	73	
30	144	6	27	56	55	

** Student left program

Each student took a useful reading interest-evaluation inventory. In addition to providing the students with the opportunity to take an active role in planning their lab programs, it involved them in self-evaluation. The questions asked students to evaluate their own reading strengths and weaknesses and provided information which was used in conjunction with the conferences, individual diagnosis and the informal reading inventory. Important information was elicited and used to design individual programs. When a student is able to isolate areas of specific, individual weakness, these skills are easier to remediate.

Of the initial 35 students questioned, it was determined that three read for pleasure on a regular basis, six stated that reading was/could be enjoyable, and only eleven of the students stated that they had ever read an entire book from cover to cover.

Conferences and discussions were held regularly. Re-evaluation and re-programming was frequently worked into each person's lab prescription to check progress.

Appropriate students took the Michigan Test of English as a Second Language. All but one was shown to have serious ESL needs. These students worked as a group during the first semester. It became apparent that more intensive reading work was needed and an additional reading workshop, which was designed for only ESL students, was implemented during the second semester. The ESL students also received special writing help with a bi-lingual writing tutor. Progress was slower with these students than with the other students in the program.

Students with special language needs should take a program designed for them and taught by a specially trained staff. The Prep Year is not the most efficient program for students who have fundamental English language needs.

By the end of the Fall semester, it was expected that a Prep Year Program student should be able to do the following with at least 70 percent proficiency:

1. Define the general topic and specific focus of a given selection.

2. Propose and state the main idea of a given selection with justification.

3. Recall and specify the details which support the main idea in a given selection.

4. Recognize and effectively use the external structure of a book, chapter and/or article as an aid in identifying and recalling the topic, main idea, supporting details and for purposes of notetaking.

5. Extract from a given selection the topic, main idea and supporting detail and re-structure the material concisely in his own words.

6. Translate the topic/subject, main idea and supporting detail into at least one of the conventional formats as designated by the instructor.

7. Categorize the information from a given body of readings to be recalled, at short or long range, for the purpose of demonstrating the acquisition of factual material.

8. Respond to short-answer, objective-type tests with an ability to assess the structure and nature of the question and the answer demand.

9. Vocabulary

   (a) Dictionary use. Understand and demonstrate the use of the various components of a dictionary as a reference tool.

(b) Context. Define unfamiliar words by means of contextual analysis, with specific reference to phrase structure, contrasting words, grammatical form and the general tone of the passage.

(c) Word Structure. Analyze the basic structure of the English academic vocabulary and, within this, identify and define the root and affixes of a body of specific words.

(d) Library use. Identify and demonstrate ability to use the resource components of the library.

By the end of the Spring term, Prep Year Program students were required to demonstrate, at a level of at least 70 percent proficiency, ability in critical reading:

1. Generalization and Inference. Abstract from a given reading selection the logical consequences implicit in the ideas presented therein.

2. Evaluation. Appraise a given selection in regard to its structure, style, tone, rhetorical devices and reasoning patterns.

3. Synthesis and Integration. Consider information on a given topic from several sources, assess its content and formulate new perspectives.

4. Notetaking. Record ideas from both reading and listening experiences in a manner reflecting conceptualization of content which may be integrated into the student's frame of reference.

5. Essay writing and test taking. Demonstrate ability to analyze and respond effectively to substantive questions in a manner that reveals critical thinking and organizational skill of a relatively high order.

6. Vocabulary.

   (a) Denotative versus connotative diction. Differentiate between denotative and connotative meanings and the use of words with reference to a given context and structure.

   (b) Levels of usage. Identify and distinguish among various levels of diction and appropriateness their use in materials.

IMPLEMENTATION

Study skills utilizing vocabulary, concept development and comprehension received priority in group sessions. Skills stressed the ability to locate, organize and summarize ideas and information. Meaningful note taking was also stressed. Locational skills (i.e. map reading, use of index, glossary, table of contents), were worked on. The ability to evaluate ideas for validity and relevance was focused upon. The student was taught to work with information from several sources on one topic; sequencing events, using logical reasoning, prediction and establishing relationships. The ability to generalize and reason inductively and deductively was developed.

All reading skills build upon each other. The ability to find the main idea is dependent on the ability to distinguish supporting details from less important facts. Both of these concepts are dependent on the students ability to state ideas in his own words, summarize concepts and recognize and develop a hierarchy of ideas within sentences, paragraphs, chapters, articles and works. Without the ability to structure, reading any document is difficult.

Tapes, films, reading machines, programmed materials, primary materials and secondary source materials, fiction, non-fiction, poetry and drama was used during the year. A large variety of methods were used. These included peer-teaching, lecture and tutorial in order to provide a multi-modality, multi-media approach to the teaching of reading to the students in the program.

The paramount aim was to use any methods and any materials which would help to develop maximum power in reading. Special attention was given to those pupils who were reading at the lowest levels of development. Spring semester students who demonstrated the greatest development in their reading skills audited the NSLA advanced speed reading-study skills workshop (reading 2.0) in lieu of the reading lab.

During the year, students read such books as Feminism by Schneir, Man's Wordly Goods, by Huberman, The Communist Manifesto, Linda Brent's, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, From Slavery to Freedom by John Hope Franklin, Craine Brinton's Anatomy of a Revolution, Through Indian Eyes and The Essential Gandhi. In addition, many original documents were read. Traditional vocabulary, comprehension and study skills textbooks were used. Careful attention was paid to the selection of reading materials in all of the content areas using the Fry and the Spache readability formulas. Course content and maintenance of a college level program was not sacrificed. Reading assignments for the content areas were balanced and evenly distributed. An attempt was made to avoid students receiving so much work in any particular week that it would be impractical to expect its completion. Students received guidance during their classes in how to proceed with the particular assignment for the next week.

Students received reading instruction in several contexts: as part of the social institutions class, as a discrete

subject, and in lab as part of a small group, individualized program prescription and as part of a one-to-one tutorial session. The students were provided with the objectives and procedures and were aware of what was expected of them throughout.

During the portion of the class period when reading functioned as a discrete skill, a specific sub-skill was taught, its application reinforced and the skill applied to the content area reading material for the week. The social institutions professor functioned during this time in a supportive role. During the times when the emphasis of the class was on social institutions content, the reading teacher functioning in a supportive role, was able to help individual students within the framework of the class. The reading teacher reinforced and reviewed the concepts and skills previously taught. Frequently the entire process was integrated and the differentiation in roles and content specialization was less obvious than described above.

A sample lesson plan is included to demonstrate the types of integration that took place during one specific class. It is included as a sample, not a prototype.

SAMPLE LESSON: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND READING (WEEK II) IN CLASS

READING

General Aim: To read for the purpose of collecting information to answer an essay question.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to read and analyze the essay question.
   a. Students will be able to find, understand, and explain key words in the question in their own words.
   b. Students will be able to write an outline for the question.
   c. Students will be able to look at several different outlines and assess the strengths and weaknesses of each; these outlines evolve from class discussion (samples attached)
   d. Students will be able to decide how to collect information for the essay.
2. Students will understand the difference between information presented in the U.S. Constitution and that in John Hope Franklin's From Slavery to Freedom.
   a. Students will be able to use the index of a book to find relevant information.
   b. Students will be able to read, explain in their own words the relevant information from the Constitution.
   c. Students will be able to transfer references in Text and Constitution to their outlines.
3. Students will begin to write their essays

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

General Aim: To outline and write an essay dealing analytically with an important historical topic.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be able to break down essay question into a number of sub-questions.
2. Students will understand the difference between slavery and the slave trade.
3. Students will understand the difference between a law and an amendment; they will understand the processes by which each is made; they will understand why there is no amendment in the Constitution dealing with the slave trade
4. Students will understand the difference between primary documents and secondary sources; they will understand how a work of history is put together on the basis of the analysis of primary sources.
5. Students will be able to understand and write in their own words an historical explanation of the anti-slavery amendments of the Constitution.

EVALUATION

In the course of the Preparatory Year Program students and faculty have experienced dramatic changes and tremendous growth. Weaknesses and failures, it must be confessed, exist.

The year was not without its frustrations. In many cases there were clear records of intellectual development (see chart on reading scores in the report), but the personal growth of many students was the most impressive result. This growth is harder to present or demonstrate. The teaching teams felt this as students began to think harder and more rationally about life choices.

The students were introduced to a new world of learning and expression that presented its pleasures as well as its difficulties. Working in teams the teachers were often reenforcing each other and making a proportionately greater impact on the students than if they were teaching disparate courses. Tne students were encouraged to make connections and to take off from the teams enthusiasms for their different but related subject matters. There was little or no emphasis on learning facts. The finding and utilization of relevant factual materials was important for the sake of dealing with an essay question or for contributing to a discussion. The students learned that answers were not to be found in any book; that important historical questions do not have easy answers, and that there may be a number of ways of confronting a question and a number of answers, each with validity and coherence.

It was impossible to devote enough individual time to the students in this program and to also serve the needs of other students at the college. Incorporating the lab into the program was important in order to provide individual attention to students. Hence, during the Fall semester, attention was concentrated on helping two groups: students with the most severe decoding and comprehension problems and students with serious English as a second language problem. The students with less severe problems worked independently, using assistance only when encountering a problem, in need of evaluation or when ready to do more planning on the next sequence in their lab module. Second semester, the ESL students received special instruction (previously discussed), and the most advanced students were placed into an advanced reading workshop.

During the first semester, a student was required to spend specific times in the lab. Some students became more concerned with "time" than with developing skill. As a result, Spring semester, each student signed a performance contract and the development of the skill was more important than the time spent in the lab. For some students this was a better method but provided too much freedom for others. Assignments became burdens for those who did not pace their work. The second semester made it possible for a student to develop more at his own pace. The student had to deal with the effective use of time in order to complete the assignment by target date.

While many did grow and learn, some students made little progress. Others with considerable ability, did not work up to capacity. It is important to see the following account of some of our problems in the context of a general record of positive achievements, some of which can be documented, some of which are extremely difficult to delineate.

Why did certain students do well and benefit from the program while others, with the same potential, did not? There was an emotional opening up, a sense of maturity and direction and an acceptance of the discipline of hard work in the cases of those who got maximum benefit from the Preparatory Year Program. Eric Erikson describes the development of insight and responsibility in stages which were discernible in some of the more successful students.[8] In some cases there was a specific event or moment during the year when a flowering became noticeable.

The rate of progress among the students varied. With some it was great, with others nill. The greatest disappointment was with those possessing substantial potential who did not make the progress expected. In the case of the latter were students who seem to have decided early in the year that they could make it and did not exert maximum efforts. These students often got good grades, but it was obvious that they could do even better. There were flashes of exceptional work and insight, but not the consistent hard work and effort that would have brought out their best. Perhaps a few were afraid of success. In most of the cases

of little progress, there was a lack of commitment and sustained effort. These attitudes were caused by such factors as family pressures, physical problems, and language barriers of one kind or another.

Each class set its own level of achievement. This observation forms the most compelling argument for the heterogeneous classroom. Reorganizing the sections to accommodate for special needs in math, science and ESL created more homogeneous sections. The heterogeneous mixing of ability levels, interests and motivations can be done without shortchanging the individual. The key to the situation is tutorials. There is an obvious correlation between proficiency in the basic skills and intellectual excellence in the content areas. Individual tutorials must be placed in the center of the program.

Students were baffled to learn that all questions do not have definitive answers. The classroom as a forum for discussion showed that learning is not the passive acquisition of facts but the formulation of questions.

The approach to reading as discovery of themes was closely bound to that of writing as their articulation. It was made clear to the student that the ability to pick out the main idea in a paragraph is analogous to the setting down on paper a main idea of their own. Teachers endeavored to show that this is discernible in the reading experience. In the writing effort, a thesis is effectively argued only when accompanied by the supportive

evidence of contrete and well chosen examples. The experiences of reading and writing, then, mutually reinforced each other.

Normative standardized tests will continue to serve as useful measures for comparing the broad range of reaching achievement within large populations. A new system was developed which diagnosed needs, prescribed individualized programs and evaluated learning based on precise descriptions of the specific skills needed for reading within the Age of Revolutions content materials. The items were matched to the objectives and content of the program and make possible the evaluation of each individual's mastery of essential reading tasks.

The teams endeavored to create in their classrooms a context which would make possible the transition from a fragmented to a holistic understanding of the 18th and 19th centuries. This transition could, however, only be made by the students themselves. The teams offered the context; the students created the world. The students freely introduced ideas which had been explored in other courses and in the second semester the students' ability to integrate common concepts from various disciplines under the umbrella of the Age of Revolutions indicated that their understanding of that particular world was holistic: learning was no longer viewed as the fragmented accumulation of facts, but rather as a process which created a view of the world. In a final evaluation of the course, one student said, "Like a puzzle, we had all of the pieces and now could begin to put the puzzle together and

make the picture complete. We could see the correlation of each course, and the way in which the world viewed many ideas and theories on a variety of different subjects."[9]

At the end of the second semester, students were asked to write evaluations of the program. Little can be added to the following statement of one student:

> "I can say that it is the most beautiful feeling in the world to see yourself grow especially in a way that you have always believed yourself capable but never had the chance to develop it. The Prep Year is one year of college that I don't believe I will ever forget or regret."

FOOTNOTES

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